Dear Paul, 1/26/76

In between today's blood test and optical appointment (yup, new lenses) I had time to check one of the local office-supply companies where I had to go anyway for some special labbbs and the best electronics place, the one I said I would. This office supplier handles Craig. It is too large, as I thought. The electronics people handle Lanier, and I was surprised to see that it seems to have some advantages. They are sold out so I did not see the machine itself. I have a brochure and was able to discuss it with him.

The Lanier line seems to be for this use only. Locally, despite the cost, their regular-size equipment has a good reputation but the cassettes are costly.

I know one executive who uses it. (It has been sold locally to all school principals for them to use for making notes while they walk around the schools.) He is a friend. He was in conference when I phoned him and then my line stayed busy with incoming calls, until after 5. I didn't get home until after noon and most of the next five hours were taken up with a real stinker of a JFK article in the Playboy going to press tomorrow. Doctrine was laid down to the writer, apparently from Hefner.

Compared to a pack of cigarettes the Lanier is only 3/16" wider, 1/4" thicker and 1 1/2 " longer. With the controls and the mike on top these seems to be a design for pocket use as well as hand. It has features not mentioned in the article you sent that would seem to adapt it better for use in travel, like automatic background noise filter. They say you can use it on planes, cabs, etc. None of those in the article is described as having capstan drive. This does and it means twice as much time on each cassette, 30 minutes per side.

Instead of the short-lived 9v batteries it runs on two penlights, 4 hours of recording per pair and it can use rechargables. I have a recharger.

The price is about that of the Norelco. The guarantee is for a year, with local service, a distinct advantage. Less than 10 minutes away.

The literature shows an extra jack, not input, marked LD. I didn't know of this until I got home, but if it is an output, it means that I can dub the minerature cassettes, none of which will fit a standard machine, into a standard with a standard cassette for transcribing. This minerature seems to have been so successful that for office use they have developed a transcribing companion unit, using the tiny cassette without dubbing.

With all but one of the other local office supply companies I've had no dealings or unsatisfactory ones. The remaining one is owned by a friend. He is the local Hermes dealer on other Hermes products. I'll phone tomorrow and see if he handles this. There is no local office supplier who can provide local service, though.

The Lanier is $4 more than the Norelco, $199.50 plus tax. The cassettes are $4.00 each and, of course, reusable.

On the basis of what I now know, unless you learn otherwise, it seems to me that the Lanier is probably best suited and has the other advantages of local service, battery life and longer playing. If the LD represents an output, that is a real advantage none of the others has.

Best,